

The Bell Tower





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About the title:

Just as the Bell Tower at Tyler Junior College chimes on the quarter hour to mark the passage of time, it reminds students of the harmony which surrounds them in their educational pursuits. Music, dance, theatre, art, athletics, and academics blend to make Tyler Junior College a beacon to the community, the state, and the world at large. As the echoes of the chords filter through the oaks, their vibrations tremble far beyond the confines of the brick archways and winding walks where students gather. Tyler Junior College is a lofty tower of educational opportunity for students who have come from all parts of the world. The Bell Tower Arts Journal proudly hails the accomplishments of its hallowed halls and beckons those who would seek both its traditions and the promise of tomorrow.

Judith Bateman, 2006



The Bell Tower Arts Journal

Volume 3 • 2008 - 2009

Editor

Linda Gary, Ph. D.

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The editorial board for the journal is comprised of full-time faculty members from the English Department, the Graphic Arts Department, and the Fine Arts Department. The editorial board has the final approval on all selections and publication decisions.

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The selection committee for the The Bell Tower Arts Journal is comprised of active student members of Sigma Kappa Delta, the Graphic Arts Department, the Art Club, and faculty advisors.

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Editorial Policy

The Bell Tower Arts Journal is sponsored by the Psi Gamma Chapter of Sigma Kappa Delta, the National English Honor Society. We accept submissions of poetry, short fiction, non-fiction essays, photography, and fine and graphic art by current Tyler Junior College students. We accept submissions for consideration in the spring semester each year for possible publication in the next spring semester. The Bell Tower Arts Journal is entirely student generated and seeks to provide a publishing venue for the rich artistic expression of TJC students.

Our goal is to create a publication that is a high quality, content-rich source of literary and artistic expression on a wide range of topics and themes. Therefore, we seek unique, insightful work displaying vivid, lively language and artistic skill.

All submissions must be the original work of the student writer or artist who submits it for consideration or publication. We do not accept previously published or plagiarized work. Every attempt is made by the editor to assure originality. All literary pieces will be submitted to turnitin.com for an originality report. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of each student to submit only his or her own literary and artistic work.

Moreover, while we strongly support intellectual freedom as the right of every individual from all points of view, we do not accept work deemed pornographic, profane, exploitative, or that seeks to cause injury to an individual or group.

Tyler Junior College gives equal consideration to all applicants for admission, employment and participation in its programs and activities without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability or veteran status.

Acknowledgements: The editors of The Bell Tower Arts Journal gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance of the following people:

Dr. Fernando Figueroa, Dean of University Studies;
Sarah Harrison, Director of English Language Studies;
Doug Crawford, Publications Coordinator, and
Fred Peters, Director of Marketing and Public Information.



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The First

Story on page 6
She discussed the economy and rising unemployment
press a conference on Jan 22 at TJC's West
visits

First

History

NEWS

to Press
his can



Enticing Enemies

Danielle Delgado/Sophomore/Tyler/
Digital Photograph



My Words

My words, too swiftly, flew through my clenched teeth
across the tense room.
I tried, too late, to put them back in their cage,
but they were wild and reckless with their freedom,
Not willing to return even though I begged,
you did not shield your eyes:
They pecked, wounded, tore your flesh, and
then nested in your memory.

Tina Bausinger/Sophomore/Tyler

Clipping Coupons

She had started her day early. She was up and dressed, anxiously awaiting my arrival for the day.

"Mother, I'm here. Where are you?"

"I'm here in the dining room. I have been clipping out coupons from today's and from yesterday's papers."

"Oh, are we going to the grocery store today?"

"Yes, it's triple-coupon day at Brookshire's, and I have some really good ones."

I was looking through the coupons she had clipped out and noticed several items that she didn't normally use. "Mama, you don't use half this stuff."

"I know, but it's such a good savings, and we can find a use for it. Like that coupon there for Scrubbing Bubbles®. I have always wanted to try it, but it was too expensive, and now I can try it with this coupon."

"Oh, Mama, you are too funny." I wondered at her logic for clipping the coupons like she did. She was always such a frugal shopper, saving money where she could, but why clip a coupon for something you didn't use just because it was a good savings? Wasn't that just as wasteful if you didn't use the product? Maybe it was more so. Maybe she was holding on to maybe I will use it one day as if it would prolong her life. She really believed she had at least a year, if not longer, before the cancer would take her. But her oncologist and her radiation doctor said she only had six months. She would not see Christmas. She and I had talked about her funeral a few weeks before, and she thought she would have until the spring or summer, and she wanted to have spring flowers for her casket. She loved all the different colors of spring and that was what she wanted. I promised her she would have pretty spring flowers for her funeral, and I would make her casket piece. She was happy with that.

Around 10:00 that morning, we left for the grocery store. This was a special time for us. Each week it was a challenge to see how many things we could get into that small basket in front of the wheel chair I made her ride in. She had to ride in it now because the brain tumors were beginning to take a toll on her. She was beginning to stumble more and more, so we used the wheel chair for her safety,

Elizabeth Thorsgard/
Longview

but we had fun anyway. I would push her around, looking for the items on the coupons, and we would giggle and just have fun. We laughed. It was such fun and such a special time for us—one that I would always cherish long after she was gone.

"Mama, I don't think we can fit anything else in this basket."
"Here, let me hold..."

"Mama, what's wrong?" I asked. My mother just stopped in mid-sentence and started shaking uncontrollably. Now her head was jerking forward.

"Mama, what's wrong? Are you okay?" I asked with increasing desperation. She couldn't speak for what seemed like an eternity. She just shook. Someone walked by and asked if she was okay and whether she needed help. I told the woman that my mother would be okay in a minute. Finally, Mama stopped shaking. It really scared me. The funny thing was how she just picked up the sentence where she stopped when the shaking began. She told me to just let her hold the rest of the groceries in her lap, and then we would be ready to leave. I told her what had happened, but she didn't remember any of it. Still, she did agree to let me call the doctor when we got home.

When we got to the checkout, it was so funny to see all the stuff that came out of that buggy that had a coupon. The cashier looked surprised to see how many coupons we had and how much we saved when she rang it all up. When she finished ringing it up, the total came to \$126.33! That was the most we had ever gotten in the basket; it was a record for us, and we were all shocked when she put in all the coupons—Mother owed her only \$13.72. I was totally surprised, and so was the cashier. So much stuff and for only \$13.72!

We left the grocery store, but in the back of my mind, I was really glad to be taking Mama home. I wanted to call her doctor to tell him what had happened in the grocery store. After we got all the groceries put away, I called his office and told the nurse what had happened. She told me to bring her right in. I told Mama what the nurse had said, and she didn't want to go because she was tired, but I insisted, and so we went to see Dr. Duncan. Later at the office, the doctor said she had experienced a seizure, and he was putting her on some anti-seizure medicine. He told me the seizures would progressively get worse now. It was early August; my parent's anniversary was the next week. How much time did she have left? How much longer do we have with her? Will she make it to Christmas? The doctor said six months but that was

29

Monday

Wednesday

4

11

back in April when she was diagnosed. Please, God, don't take her yet. Tamara is only three, and she's always had Mama in her life. Please let Mama live long enough to spend this Christmas with her—just one more Christmas. Please, God.

Just after their anniversary August 18, she took a turn for the worse. We were out at the old home place where Howell had grown up. We had walked down to the fence to check on her tomato plants, and while walking back up to the house, a pain hit her.

"Oh, God!"

"What's wrong, Mama?"

"I don't know—just get me to the car—something's happened, and the pain is really bad!"

"Okay, we can make it, but I am calling the doctor when we get home."

"I don't care—just get me home."

"Do you want me to tell Howell?"

"No, don't bother him right now; he is mowing, and we can tell him later."

"Okay, but he is going to be mad at us for not telling him."

"It's okay; he'll get over it."

After the x-rays at Dr. Duncan's office—he was her oncologist and her primary doctor now so we called him about everything—he gave us the bad news. Her last three lumbar discs in her spine had collapsed, and it looked like the cancer had spread into that lower portion of her back. He was ordering more radiation on her lower spine, and he was hoping he could stop the spreading any further. It seemed the cancer was like a wild fire, spreading faster than the treatments could help. Time was slipping away. I cried that night. I was losing my mother to this monster called cancer, and there was nothing I could do. I felt so helpless, and Tamara was going to lose her, as well, and she was too young to lose her grandmother. She barely knew her. She was just a baby. Mama was too young for this to be happening to her. It wasn't fair—two bouts with breast cancer and now all this. It just wasn't fair.

We all gathered around for Labor Day; all three of us kids were there with our children, and it was bittersweet. I knew the time was slipping by faster now. Mama was having lots of trouble getting around and such. We didn't go out much any more, just to the doctor's office or for treatments. Then on September 19, her pain was out of control. Hospice suggested she go to the hospital to get it under control, and then she could come home, and they would be able to manage the pain for her. I never will forget the way she looked at me that day.



Dear

P.O. BOX
TYLER,
903-510-2
CELL: 903
FAX No

"This is it, isn't it?"

"What do you mean, Mama?"

"This is the last stop."

"No, Mama, we're here to get your pain under control, and then you will go back home in a day or so."

"No, Elizabeth, this is the end. I know it is, and I am ready. I'm just worried about Howell. He is hurting so."

"Mama, it's going to be okay. You're going to get better...you have to...we need you...I need you...Tamara needs you."

"Just promise me you'll be there for Howell—he loves you so, and I want you to take care of him. He will need you now; he's not that strong."

"I promise, Mama. I will be there for him."

She was admitted to the hospital, and the doctor told us it was time to call in the family. He didn't think she would make it through the weekend. So we let everyone know. My sister came in and so did Mama's sisters and her one brother. Her mother didn't come because of her health, but then Mama rallied and came out of her coma on Monday. Everyone was rather shocked, and they all left to go back home to jobs and to their lives. Mama was in the hospital for five and a half weeks. She was comatose for most of those days. I stayed with her every day. I only went home to change clothes at night and to kiss Tamara good night, then I went back to the hospital to stay with Mama.

Mama lost her battle with cancer on October 18, 1990. I made sure she had spring flowers for her casket and easels that were ordered. It was the hardest thing for me to do. I cried all the way through it, but it was a labor of love—my last time to arrange flowers for my mother, and they had to be perfect.

Later on, I was going through her things, and I came across her coupon organizer. It was always full of various clipped coupons, but sometime or other she had cleaned them all out. She must have known her time was limited, and she was thinking ahead and just threw out all the coupons that she would not be able to cash in. She knew it was time to clean out the organizer. She would never clip coupons again. I would never share that time with her again. She knew it was time. I cried that day. I let it all out, and now all these years later, I am crying now—to have just one more day with her, just one more trip to the grocery store with her coupons. I can't look at a coupon without thinking of all the laughter we shared on triple-coupon day. Memories that stay with me always.

16

49

55

0 0 4

19 49
52

2001

1949

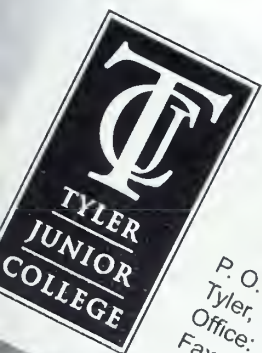
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2001

2008				
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25	26	27	28	29

May				
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Wednesday, April 16



Kim
Vice
Advan

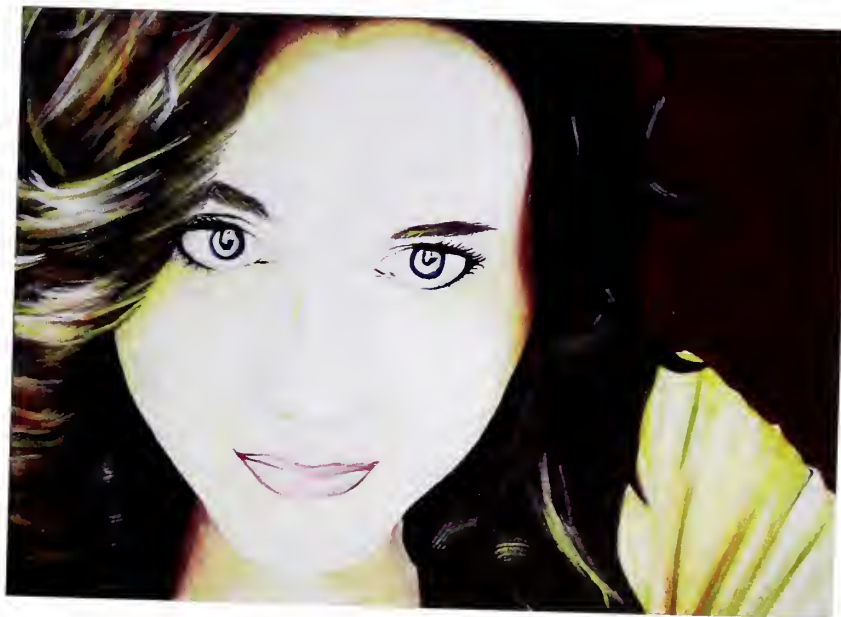
P. O. Box 9020
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Winter Sleep

Grandma's winter quilt
drapes over sleeping children
like snow-covered shrubs.

Brinda Carey/Whitehouse

13



Decisions, Decisions

Tiffany Moore/Freshman/Henderson/
Acrylic



Broke

*Aaron Cheek/Freshman/Flint/
B&W Photograph*

Always Hard

It's always hard
To fly without wings,
Heal without time,
Cry without tears,
Breathe without air,
Smile without strength,
Talk without truth,
Promise without a heart,
Stand without first falling,
Remember without forgetting,
Know without learning,
Hear without listening,
Touch without feeling,
End without beginning,
Love without earring,
Live without dreaming,
And die without living.

Kelly Blanchard/Sophomore/Grand Saline



Fall

Stefanie Vause/Chandler/Digital Photograph

January 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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28						

March 2009

April

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



A Road Less Traveled

Tiffani Waites/Sophomore/Jacksonville/
B&W Photograph

I AM

He said to me,
"I am not the answer—
I exist without question.
I am not the key to happiness,
But the Joy of the Heart.
I AM the Truth, just walk with me."
All I know is that I said *yes* to Him, and now I'm alive!

Lesley Bell/Sophomore/Keller



Forgotten Fall

*Morgan Hare/Sophomore/Tyler/
Digital Photograph*

Grandma's Cactus Garden

Grandma's quilt gave me the best hug I'd had in a long time. I snuggled deeper into the colorful girls wearing bonnets while I soaked up the heavenly smell of coffee and bacon. I was only eleven and not allowed to drink coffee, but I could almost taste it just by breathing in the aroma. Most days at home Momma shuffled out peanut butter sandwiches or cinnamon toast like a deck of cards as my five brothers and sisters and I rushed to meet the bus for school. However, Grandma always cooked a big breakfast. We would need it to accomplish all the work to be done. In 1969, everyone had a garden, and Grandma was no exception. In fact, back then I thought she invented the idea.

"Rise and shine," Grandma hollered from the kitchen. "Wake up, sleepy head."

The linoleum floor was uncommonly chilly for a bright spring morning. The chair creaked and wobbled when I sat down, alerting Grandma to my presence.

"How did you sleep last night, Sarah?" she asked while wiping her hands on her apron. The checks on her apron did not match the flowers on her faded cotton dress, but it was pretty all the same. It was nice to see her smiling at me with her mouth and her light blue eyes. She gave me a hug and added the smell of Aqua Net and starch to the breakfast bouquet.

I knew she expected an answer, not like home where Momma yelled at us all the time to shut up. "Good. Lots better than at home. Someone is always making racket, and Becky and Carla wiggle around too much. They kick me even when they're asleep." I pulled my legs up under the hem of my gown that she had made for me, attempting to fit the hem over my feet but careful not to tear a hole in it. I didn't know when I'd get another one. Gowns, like days alone with Grandma, were prized possessions we had to share. The flannel warmed my toes and covered the bruises on my legs.

Grandma hummed "Amazing Grace" and flipped two eggs in the iron skillet that was still sizzling with bacon grease. The counter top remained dusted with flour and her favorite Vienna sausage can she always used to cut perfect buttermilk biscuits. However, the biscuit I wanted would be tucked into the corner of the pan. She

Brinda Carey/
Whitehouse

would have put it in last—a hard, lumpy one made from all the little pieces of dough left over after cutting.

A small glass rooster and hen containing salt and pepper were placed in the center of the table. Next to them sat homemade watermelon rind preserves and a mason jar full of canned peaches. My mouth started to water. Grandma had remembered these were my two favorite toppings for hot buttered biscuits.

I was surprised to see that she had put the flowers I gave her into a jelly glass which sat right smack dab in the middle of the table. Momma usually threw them in the trash. She claimed they were just a bunch of nasty old weeds. There wasn't much I could ever do to make Momma happy.

Grandma was pretty like the flowers. Momma called her a stupid, shriveled up old bag. I figured Momma must have bad eyes. Grandma never talked bad about Momma, though. She was what people called "pretty on the inside," too. On the outside, she had tight curls framing pink cheeks, a warm body, and gentle hands. Last night, after putting my hair in pigtails, I watched as she rolled strips of soft grey onto rollers and stuck a long pink pin in them, so they would stay on her head. She tied a headscarf over them; however, I bet the bristles still made her head hurt all night!

The sun announced it was time to get to work by shining through the window to make four pictures of faded flowers to decorate the vinyl tablecloth. I looked out the window. It was partially open, and a slight breeze ruffled the pale green curtains. On the windowsill, Grandma had several little hand-painted pots of cactus with tiny flowers of red or yellow blooming on them.

Grandma took my hand, and we marched out to the shed where she kept her lawn and garden tools. She handed me the hoe with the shortest handle and took the other one for herself. Pancake-shaped cactus had grown along her fence for as long as I could remember. Since last summer, they must have had babies or something because now there were some growing right where Grandma always put her garden. Great. I wore tennis shoes, jeans, and a t-shirt, and everything I was wearing had holes in it. This would be tricky.

We chopped along in silence for a good while. It felt nice working with her. I'd rather spend a whole day digging in the dirt and getting sunburned than stay at home. This was fun. It was actually like a vacation compared to helping Momma take care of my brothers and sisters all day plus doing chores. Knowing my



LEGE

19

luck, today would have been clean-out-the-fridge day at home. Ugh! Gag! Butter bowls full of food that no longer resembled anything edible. I'd probably have had to wash the dishes afterward, too. And even if I worked hard all day, Momma would find something wrong with it. Not that she ever needed much of a reason to punish us. I most of all because I was supposed to "be an example" but never was perfect.

"Honey, are you all right? You look kind of sick," said Grandma. She placed her fingers lightly on my forehead.

"Nah. I was thinking about what I'd be doing if I was at home today. I don't know how you talked Momma into letting me come over today, but I'm glad you did. I wish I could come over more," Then more quietly I muttered, "I wish I could live here."

Grandma didn't say anything. I glanced up to discover whether or not she had heard me. Grandma leaned on her hoe; her eyes looked all glassy and sad. Oh, no. What did I do now? I'm always screwing things up.

Wanting forgiveness, I asked, "Grandma, do you want me to hoe down the cactus? I don't mind. Really. We could get rid of all of them. You shouldn't have to have cactus growing in your garden anyway."

"No. No, that's okay. We need...", suddenly her smile came back. "I like them. I want to keep them here because they remind me of something important." She chuckled at my confused expression. "Cactus are strong, Sarah. They can live on little to nothing. Hard, dry dirt. Nothing but sun and an occasional sprinkle of rain. That little bit of rain has to be enough to last a long time. God doesn't love the cactus any less than the flowers. He just knows they can handle it." She stopped for a minute and gave me a searching look. I knew she was trying to explain something important to me, so I remained quiet. In the awkward silence, I nudged the freshly turned dirt with my toe.

Grandma continued, "Do you see how some of the cactus have flowers on top? That is because they are so patient and good on the inside until one just pops out, so everyone can see and admire its beauty. But it must have the sun to continue to grow and bloom. That is the key."

I raised my hand to shade my eyes and looked up at Grandma. The sun shimmered around her face and her dress swayed with the breeze. I wonder if this is how angels look.

"It is the same for us, Sarah. Some of us have a much harder life than others, and it doesn't seem fair. But if we are

Dr. Mike Metke
President



P.O. BOX 9020
TYLER, TEXAS
75703-5100

Changing L

patient, keep on doing the right thing, and trust in the Son," she pointed up to the sky, "God's son, Jesus Christ, to always be there for us, then we will bloom. Hang in there, Sarah. It won't be easy, but He has promised us it will be worth it!"

In those days child abuse was a sick family secret, forbidden to be mentioned by anyone to anyone. But that day, I knew she knew. Grandma wouldn't always be around, but she sprinkled some rain on us as often as she could. She would be the only person in my life who ever let me know, in her own way, that she understood. I might not have completely understood her story then, but like the cactus, it grew and bloomed within me through the years.

This is why today, on her casket, lay a dozen long-stemmed, red roses....and one tiny cactus.



Sepia 2

*Jamie De La Rosa/Sophomore/Tyler/
Digital Photograph*



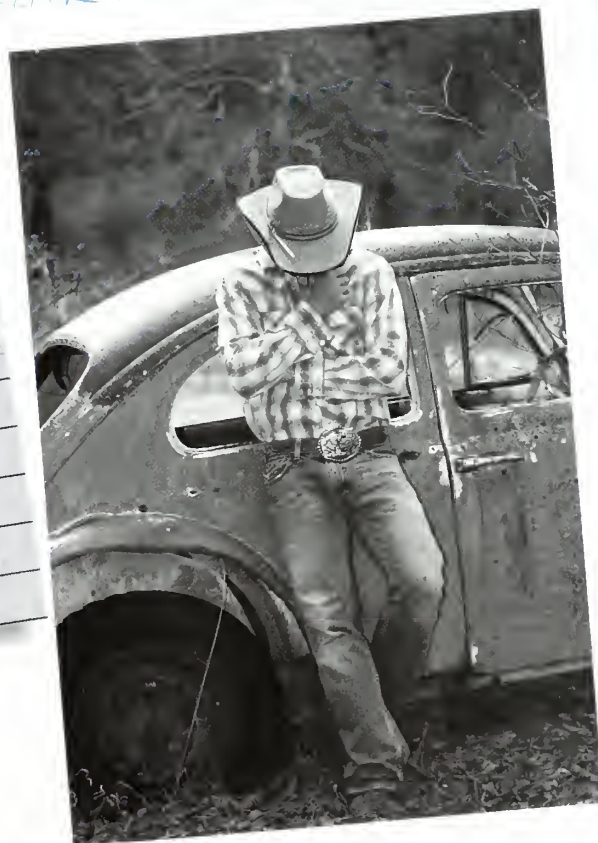
Juliet

Janie Jackson/Sophomore/Tyler/
B&W Photograph



Cowboy Way

Mary Farbutton/Whitehouse/
B&W Photograph





Antique Pears

*Kamren Thompson/Sophomore/Lindale/
Digitally Enhanced Photograph*

Procrastination

Two down, one to go,
Inspiration has left,
Need still exists,
Pencil won't write,
Paper lies blank,
Panic sets in,
Hours are short, but so is this
Potato!

Jason Litchfield/Sophomore/Niles, MI

Shadows Remain

I am a mere shadow,
A shade, and nothing more
Of all whom I have known.
Tempered by the horrors
Of someone else's addiction
And shattered by the fear that
Perhaps I will never be
Completely whole.

I am a decoupage
Of everyone and no one:
Bits of broken, mismatched pieces
Work against one another
To form a
Mutt of an urn
That can do nothing
But waste the life
Poured into it.

My body is
Stained with the
Ruined runes of
Stories not my own
That I cannot decipher,
And, therefore, do not under-
stand.

And because I am the
Remains of so many,
The makeshift whole that I am

Is foreign to me.
This flesh I
Know not.

I am hard-pressed,
Turning on the wheel,
Fearful of the change
I fear
Will not come.

I am a mere shadow,
A shade and nothing more,
Of all whom I have known—
A ghastly conglomeration
Of wind and rain
That destroys
Without mercy.

I am a mere shadow,
A shade and nothing more,
But at least there is enough light
To see.

**Jennah Rose English/
Sophomore/
Tyler**

Sisters

Flibbertigibbit, a word my sister can say;
She yells out absurd things as she watches me play.
She calls us all mad sorts of things,
Then hurles her doll and key rings.

They practice and practice, but she makes not a sound
Unless it's to say things far from profound.
What do you expect from a kid twenty-inches tall,
But why do they have to make babies so small?

I imagine she says she likes my hair
as she pulls it and pulls it without a care.
I'll give her a week, a month at the most,
Then I'm asking for a puppy or maybe French toast.

Stephanie Homann/Sophomore/Bullard



Silenced Beauty

Karen Hernandez/Sophomore/Tyler/
B&W Photograph





Fishin' Hole

Aaron Cheek/Freshman/Flint/
B&W Photograph



Jester

Katie Page/Freshman/Tyler/
Colored Pencils

Remix

I heard a song today that
Spoke words of wisdom, let it be, let it be.
But what's always inspired me is that
I have a dream.
And when I am down, and oh, my soul so weary,
I know that we will
Come together
And
Be all that we can be.
Who knew this day wasn't like the rest?
Because today,
You are beautiful, and they can't hold us down.
So when you're
Down and low,
Look toward the day when we can be
Free at last,
To speak and be heard, Mr. President, Mr. Senator,
And
Let freedom ring
So that we may remain
Dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Brittany Fenton/ Sophomore/ Lindale

Credits :

John Lennon & Paul McCartney: "Let It Be" and "Come Together"

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: "I Have a Dream" (1963)

Rolf Lovland & Brenden Graham: "You Raise Me Up"

USMC: Marine Corps motto

Marcos Curiel, Noah Bernardo, Paul Sandoval, and Mark Daniels: "Youth of the Nation"

Linda Perry: "Beautiful"

Greg Prestopino, Christina Aguilera, Scott Storch, Matt Morris, and Matthew Wilder: "Can't Hold Us Down"

Paul Simon: "Bridge Over Troubled Waters"

Mark Batson, Marshall Mathers, Michael Elizondo, Andre Young, and Che Pope: "Mosh"

Abraham Lincoln: "Gettysburg Address"



Composure

Danielle Delgado/Sophomore/Tyler/
B&W Photograph

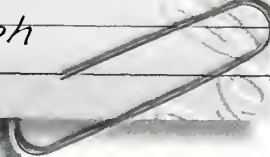


P. O.
Tyler,
Office:
Fax: 903-510-2266
Email: krus@tjc.edu



For You

Katie Foster/Freshman/Henderson/
Digital Photograph



What The Writer Knows

Just between the lines,
That one subtle reference,
(Obsession),
Trapped just barely
Beneath that thin layer of ice,
That one little fragment
Of her soul she so desperately
Wants to unloose,
(Confession),
But is too wary to
Form its name.

So she weaves it in:
A master knitter,
Love and devotion in every single stitch,
Without even knitting at all.
And in her agony,
She finds favor—satisfaction—
You missed it!
(Pride).



If you caught it,
You would have to look
At the writer herself,
Dash the mask from her
Painted face,
Rape the smile from her lips,
Take it by force
Because the masquerade is all she has.
She's holding on for life
And won't let go,
(Desperation),
She's there.
Every god-forsaken heartache,
Every dying tear,
Every lofty, unattainable vision,
Every sinful desire,
(Seeking absolution),
She is there.
You just don't see her,
(Anonymity).

Scars can't heal
Until the cuts are formed—

And they are there—
The blood offers nothing,
But she likes it,
(Weakness).

She wants you
To read what she has written,
Witness what words
Her mind has conceived,
(Help her).

And then,
When you miss it,
She wants to tell you
Why she specifically
Chose the word—

(Agony),
(Despair),
(Hopelessness),
(Sweet),
(Disturbing),
(Freedom),

She wants to
Enlighten you,
Open up your eyes
To what reasoning hides
Just below the surface,
(Truth).

She wants you to see her,
(Unconditionally),

See her—
Not the damned puppet—
But her.
(Vulnerable, heart and soul,
Splayed open on the page
For all to see the
Darkness there).
She wants you to
Acknowledge her
(Impending demise),
(Inner-Horror),
And love her
In spite of
What isn't there,
In spite of what
Only the writer knows,
(Salvation),
(Justification),
(Redemption).

**Jennah Rose English/Sophomore/
Tyler**



TEXAS

Jeep

Aaron Cheek/Freshman/Flint/
B&W Photograph



Youth

Jamie De La Rosa/Sophomore/
Tyler/B&W Photograph



They Fold the Flag

31

The July sun is ablaze,
Cascading over the clouds
In flashing currents,
Illuminating the sky a
Brilliant and unending blue.
The earth it falls so
Graciously upon
Is bedecked with a
Field of jewel-like, glittering emerald.
And on that royal lawn,
Unending rows of
Purified wood:
In the symbol of the Savior,
The souls which slumber below
Shall one day know.
The man in the blue suit
Stands stoically off to the
Left center of the camera's eye.
And although this is not
His moment,
Every eye rests upon him.
They rebuke him in their
Hated silence,
Cursing him in the secret parts.
For in their minds
He is to blame for the
Earth's newest cross.
His chin is up.
His broad shoulders squared against
The quiet onslaught.
It is almost as if
He is oblivious to their presence
Completely.
For his own eyes
Are on the mother,
And the young wife,
And the two little girls,
One of which rests sweetly
Upon her mother's comforting breast,
Eyes closed,
Mind lost somewhere in the
Blissful peace of slumber,
Far too young ever to know,
Ever remember,



But ever mourn the difference.
The man in blue,
The pin on his lapel flashing,
Stately stands,
Bold and brave, unbroken in his burdened convictions.
In the distance,
The tangible silence is softly shattered
As the lone bugler whispers through his instrument
A mournful music.
His choral words hover over the congregation,
Blanketing them in generations' chill.
His final, somber note stretches out across the lawn,
Intertwining its fingers into the song of an
Honored call:
A shout,
Gunfire.
A shout,
Gunfire.
The man in blue continues to hold his
Brave stance,
His eyes unblinking
As Grace begins to sing
Through the bagpipes.
Two young soldiers,
Clad in the virgin white of the sea,
Step rigidly before the horizontal blanket of
Blood, sweat, and tears
That stretches itself over a burgundy casket
As if unwilling to let go of
What it had lost.
The young men salute proudly,
Both holding to their reserves,
Desperate to repress the tears that
Had already broken upon their war-weathered faces.
Every breath lies waiting
In every chest.
The boys, barely men,
Take their respective posts
At head and foot.
White-gloved hands
Take the blue of the crown
And the sole's blood and water,
Lifting the reluctant colors from the wood.
Together, in dogged precision,
Hand over hand,
The resplendent rectangle
Becomes a tragic, tear-stained triangle.
One soldier draws the emblem

To his heavy breast,
 Turning his back solemnly
 On the to be forgotten
 Toward those who have been
 So mercilessly left behind.
 And as he kneels before the
 Weeping woman,
 Barely a woman,
 All eyes revert
 From the man in blue
 To the young woman in black:
 And in that moment of release,
 The man in blue lets out a great, guttural sigh.
 And before the eyes of hate can
 Fall upon him again,
 His stoic stance is broken only
 By a solitary tear.

Jennah Rose English/ Sophomore/ Tyler

P.O. BOX
 Tyler, TX 75711



Woody

Mary Tarbutton/ Whitehouse/
 B&White Photograph





Untitled

*Stefani Vause/Chandler/
Photograph*



Follow The Light
*Shelby Mink/Sophomore/Whitehouse/
Digital Photograph*

Mojave

Five years have passed since you went away,
Yet I still think of you every day, remembering your smile,
Your laugh,
Your way of thinking.

One thousand, eight-hundred days I have missed you:
Is that all? It somehow feels like more.
Feels like ten-thousand days have passed without talking to you,
A hundred-thousand days without asking your advice,
Seeing your face.

I've done the math.
It's an aching equation with no real solution
Except the infinity symbol.

Some days the grief is fresh like a new cut,
The blood runs again,
My own personal Nile.
The tears fill my own Arctic Ocean:
A cold place that is hostile to life—
The wind alone will kill you.
My grief is the fire of the volcanoes in Hawaii:
The burning lava is pulling me in;
Dante is my friend.

You missed your daughter's wedding,
The birth of your granddaughter,
Did you have a previously made appointment?

I missed you.
No.

To say you are missed is almost laughable in its absurdity—
A hyperbole in and of itself.
There was a hole there, an unmistakable absence of light,
A Grand Canyon of loss.

Except I didn't lose you.
I know where you are:
You are in my son's smile,
My daughter's generosity,
Your granddaughter's wit.

Five years have passed since I said goodbye,
Holding your hand as you left this place,
Begging you to stay, pleading with you to go.

A million hours have passed, and the ticking of the clock never
ends.

I think I see you, but it's just a mirage.
The hourglass fills up again and again;
The grains of sand flow through my hands,
My own Mojave.

Tina Bausinger/ Sophomore/ Tyler

P.O. Box 9020
Tyler, TX 75711



True Love

*Karen Hernandez/ Sophomore/ Tyler/
B&W Photograph*

Worker Bee

Worker bee, worker bee,
Look at these things:
The flowers of the meadow,
The buds of the trees.

I do not have time,
Time for these things;
I must make more honey,
To keep me 'till spring.

The beauty you miss
In this life that you live
Tells a tale of a man
Who is vacant within.

Why like a child
Do you pretend
That living is more
Than illusion for men?

Because this is my choice,
This is my will;
Life is too short
To down like a pill.

This isn't my choice;
This is my plight.
You live to dream;
I live to die.

You are an actor,
And this world is our stage,
But it is your choice,
The part that you play.

What do I have?
What in me do you see?
I am but a worker,
Merely a bee.

You have glorious wings,
Wings that can fly,
But you dare not venture
Too far from the hive.

But why, oh why,
Hermit of the sky?
The whole world to your wings,
But you choose the hive.

Oh, but why, why you,
Man, standing so tall,
Do you survey my life
When you have it all?

My life on the surface
Be not all that it seems;
Do not judge my worth
In these material things.

My tree has wilted;
I no longer bear fruit.
I am running from time,
But, bee, so are you,

What do you mean?
I can do as I please;
I have the rest of my life
To use these two wings.

But, bee, don't you see,
But six weeks do you live,
And your whole life is spent—
Spent storing for when?

You are the wind;
I am the tree.
I bear great fruit;
You are but the breeze.

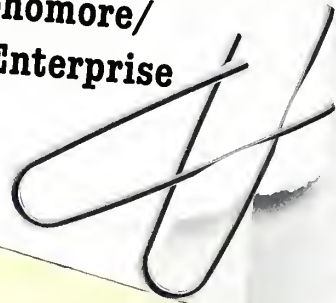
Yes, bee, yes,
My soul it runs free
Because my time is short,
I savor all things.

The air, the trees,
The flowers in spring,
Marvels you made,
I take joy in these things.

The flowers, the trees,
I see not what you see;
Who are you to know
what lies underneath?

You wish to know me?
You wish to know truth?
Open your eyes, bee:
Bee, I am you.

**Mark Adam Lollar/
Sophomore/
Mt. Enterprise**



Let's Play

*Sherika Bailey/Sophomore/Tyler/
Digitally Enhanced Photograph*



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Into The Blue

Shelby Mink/Sophomore/Whitehouse/
Digital Photograph

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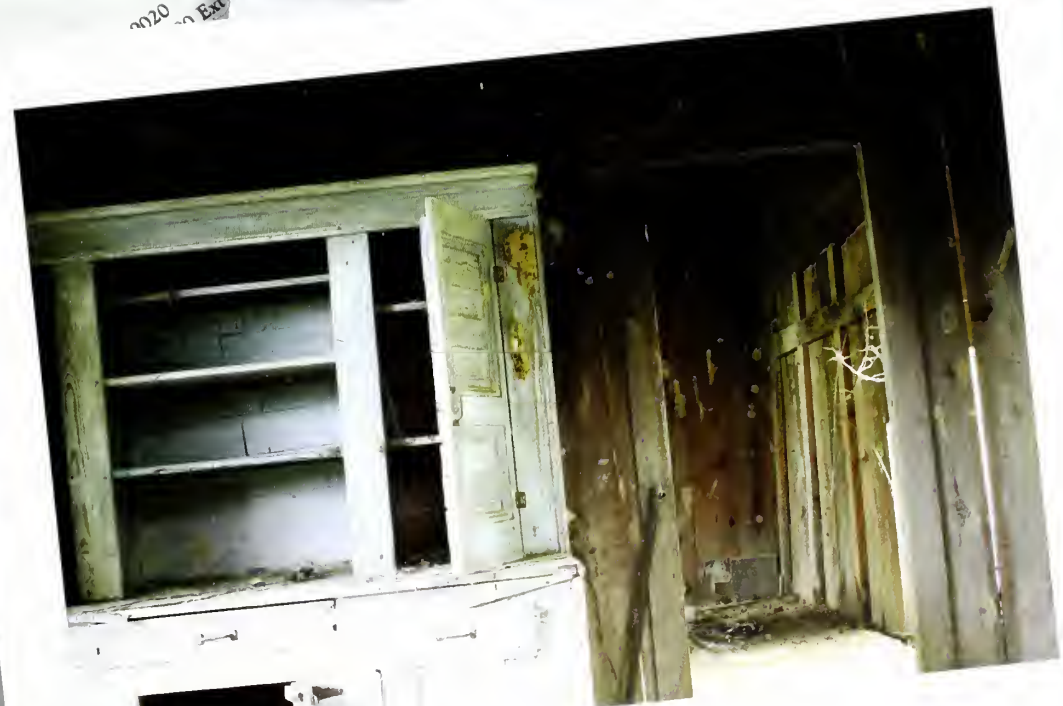
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2001

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2020 Ed



Abandoned

Tiffani Waites/Sophomore/Jacksonville/
Digital Photograph

TYLE



To Write Love On Her Arms

Danielle Delgado/Sophomore/Tyler/
Graphic Design



Changing Lives.



Alone In Battle

Mitchell Tinney/Sophomore/Golden/
B&W Photograph

Tina Bausinger/
Sophomore/
Tyler

To My Daughter on Her Graduation Day

41

I still remember your first day of kindergarten. Your blonde hair was pulled up in two ponytails, and you smelled of new clothes and bubble bath. You were so scared, you were shaking. Oh, wait, that was me. Do you remember the advice I gave you? It's funny how it still applies. It was something like this:

Be friendly to the other kids. They are nervous, too.

Play jump rope at recess. It's good to get your heart pumping, and you will have at least two other girls to talk to.

Don't throw away your sandwich and just eat the Twinkie. I will know.

Pay attention in class, mind your manners, and most importantly, don't wait too long to go to the bathroom.

Don't have secret friends or secret clubs. In general, don't have secrets. If something feels wrong, it's because it is.

Don't volunteer to be the kid that takes names.

It's nice to have a lot of friends, but don't be close friends with people who have questionable character.

It's true what they say: you can tell what kind of person you are by the friends you keep.

Don't worry about stepping on cracks. I'll be fine.

Don't be too curious about the boys' bathroom. Trust me, it's not that great.

Sit in the middle of the bus. Sit too far in the front, and you are a nerd. Sit too far in the back, and you will learn another language. And it's not Spanish.

If you have a substitute teacher, treat her with respect. Just because the other kids are swimming on the

floor doesn't mean you have to. It's okay to be alone when you are right.

Don't make fun of the weird kid.

He has feelings, too.

Here are a few addendums:

Try to save some money. When rainy days come, they're usually in the form of hurricanes.

Study hard. Don't procrastinate.

In case anyone tries to tell you otherwise, copying and pasting IS cheating.

Ramen noodles are not food.

Ever.

Be as generous as you can with your time, your friendships, and your love. But at the same time, don't be anyone's doormat.

Don't change yourself for anyone else. Who you are is fine. And don't hang around with people who want you to change.

Don't spend too much time trying to make someone love you. It should be easy. If they can't appreciate the beauty of you, move on. You can't make the blind see.

About love and marriage: don't marry the one you can live with. Marry the one you can't live without.

Decide what you love and do it. Don't settle. This is success.

If you need help, ask. This goes for homework, bills, and personal struggles. It's not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of wisdom.

Love with your whole heart, holding nothing back. Sometimes you will get hurt this way, but it's the only way. Anything less is cowardly.

Your family loves you. No matter how far you go, you know the way home. Always.

Love, Mom



Campo de Mio
 Heather Garza/Sophomore/Tyler/
 Mixed Media

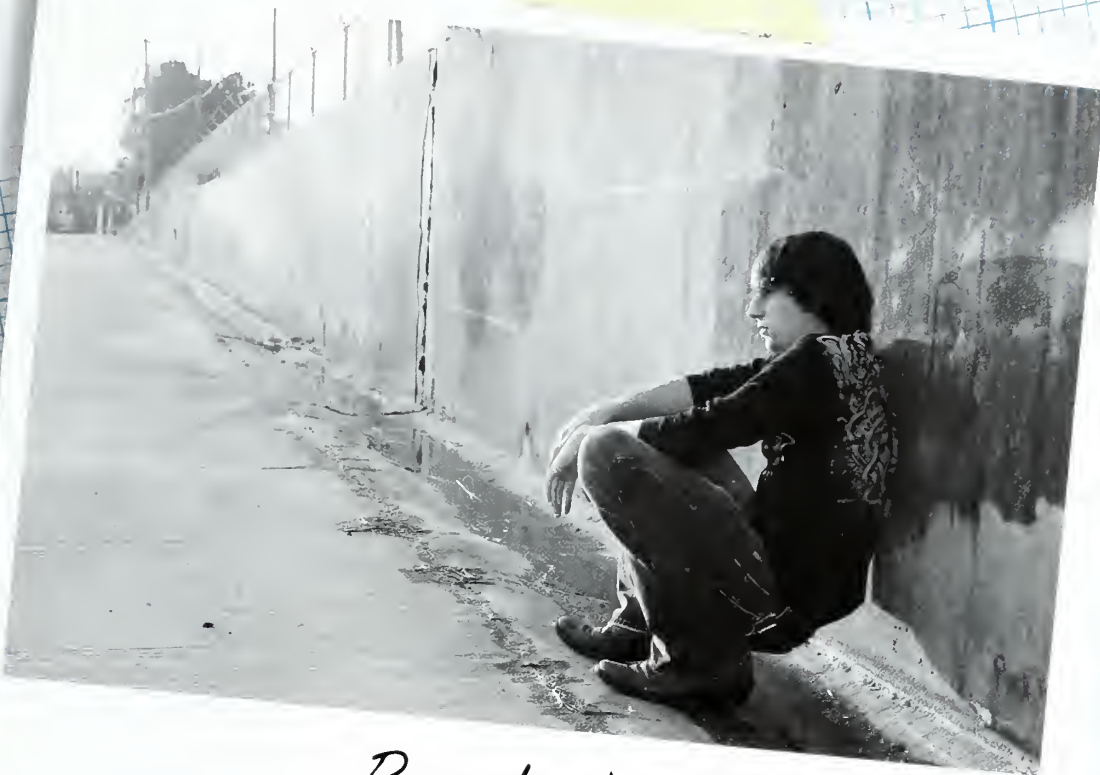


Go Home



Shadow
 Molly Stanley/Sophomore/Lindale/
 B&W Photograph

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Pondering
Aaron Cheek / Freshman / Flint /
B&W Photograph



The Old Mill
Tina Bausinger / Sophomore / Tyler /
Digital Photograph

Between the Book and Me

Between the book and me,
Line upon line
Of senseless stories and
useless rhymes,
Torn up pages,
Down through the ages,
Giving life to bitter stages,
Shattered dreams—
Or so they seemed—
The very heart and soul of
me.

Empty reasons,
In all the seasons,
My personal Jesus.
My death and rebirth,
My countenance, my girth,
My place on this Earth.
Pages tattered,
Hopes are shattered,
Nothing mattered.
Left alone with my demons,
Leather-bound and
screaming,
Broken by shadows of
outward deceiving,
Once sin, now salvation
gained.
Scars cannot heal unless
they are made;
Once begun in the heart,
nothing old can remain.

Baptismal effect,
Blot out the regret,
The best is only yet
To be found.
Not all around,
But in the looking down,
Looking within,
What appears to be hid—
Ah!—the indescribable gift!
Run from, then cleft to,
Echoes of what one can do.
And a persistent aching for
the truth:

All the pages
Bear witness to all the stages,
Healing lies in revealing rage.
Redeemed, I've been:
Redeemed, to live,
Redeemed, to give,
To whisper the tale
Of a soul bound in hell,
And the Star, bright, that fell.
Scars only felt
Finally heal themselves;
When taken off the dusty
shelf,

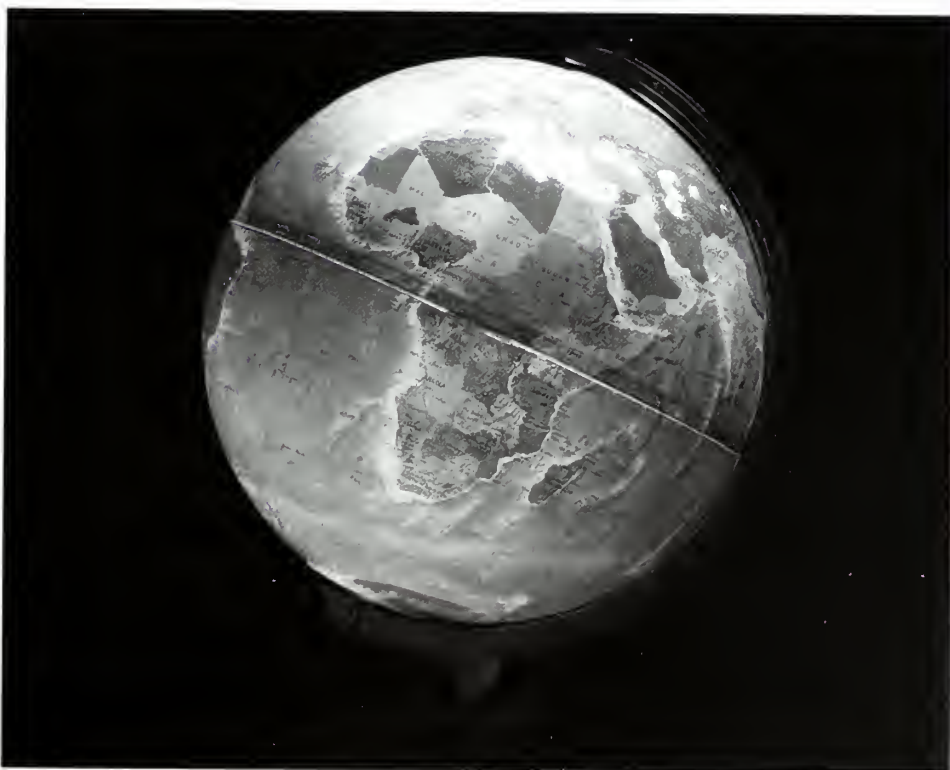
There on the lines
Of broken, dying rhymes—
Salvation—between the book
and me.

Jennah Rose English/ Sophomore/Tyler



Shadows

Janie Jackson/Sophomore/Tyler/
Digital Photograph



B&W World

Mary Tarbutton/Whitehouse/
B&W Photograph

45

nt
INE

February 2009

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March 2009

2009

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2009

A Rant on Injustice

A twitch.
An ouch!
A sting.

A zap that shocks up to my head
Which, in turn, signals my arm to
act and act quickly.
It is an automatic strike,
But, alas, I have been taken
advantage of again.

Robbed.
Ripped off.
Purloined.
Any of the aforementioned
adjectives will do.

But that's not the worst part—
Oh, no!
The worst is the aftermath:
The agony.
The torture of what's left behind.
The irritation of a thousand
younger siblings

All concentrated into a single
point
That stews and burns and drives
me insane!

My teeth grind.
My stomach turns in a furious
wave.

I want to scream out the injustice!
The unfairness of it all!
Why does this always happen to
me?

Why?
Will someone please tell me?

They say it's because
I'm so "sweet".
Uh huh.
That's not an answer!

So I lash out irrationally,
Groping around for some relief.
My friends and family try to stop
me,

Saying it's not good for me.
They give me their advice on how
to deal with it,
But who can stop a train with a
band-aid?

Strangers give me looks of either
sympathy or disgust as
they pass by,
But neither helps me, so I try to
ignore them.
This goes on for weeks, sometimes
months.

And then, just as suddenly as it
began,
I realize that I've forgotten all
about it.

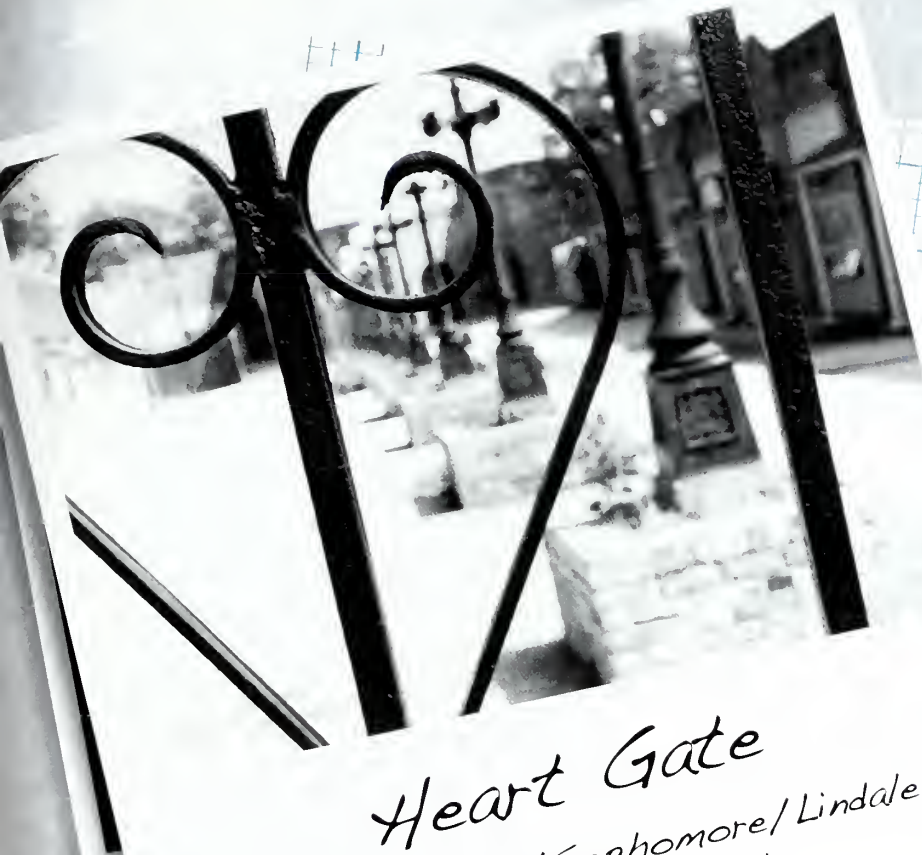
All the pain seems to have
dissipated within me.
But I know it's likely to happen
again,
And so I can't help but ask
myself:

Why?
Why did God create mosquitoes?

**Sarah Elaine Goodwin/
Sophomore/ Frankston**

OR COLLEGE





Heart Gate
Molly Stanley/Sophomore/Lindale/
B&W Photograph

47

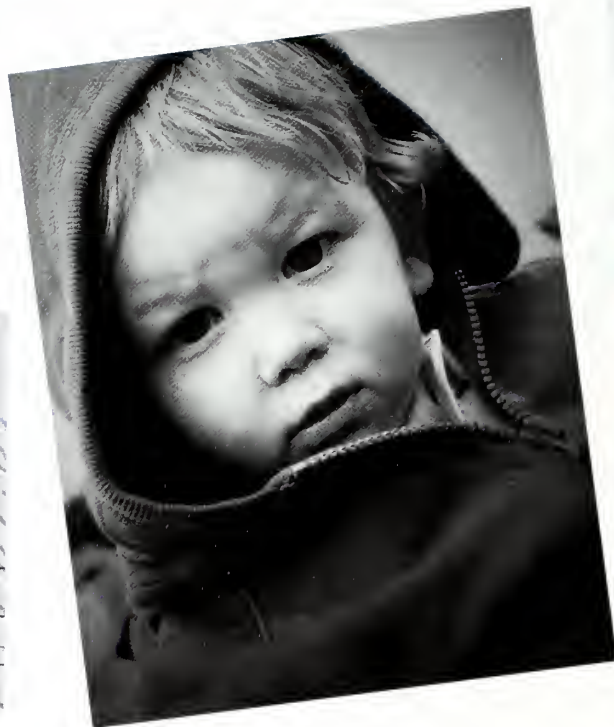


Snowy Pond
Tina Bausinger/Sophomore/Tyler/
B&W Digital Photograph



Innocence

Danielle Delgado/Sophomore/Tyler/
B&W Photograph



It Was a Cow

It was a cow. It stood in the field and ate grass. I'm not sure why it was there, but it was. I walked up to it and asked, "So why are you here?" It just looked at me and ate. Since I was not sure if it had heard me, I spoke up. "Why are you here?!" Still, it did not say a word. Now I was sure that the cow was deaf. I'm not sure what I will do with it. I can't kill it. Who wants to eat a steak that can't hear how good it tastes? I may just keep it as a pet.

Jason Litchfield/Sophomore/Niles, MI



Untitled

Joshua Pieper / Freshman / Quitman /
B&W Photograph



Game Plan

Karen Hernandez / Sophomore / Tyler /
B&W Photograph

Kelly Blanchard/
Sophomore/
Grand Saline

The Stairwell Choir

Come, come, sit closer, dear stranger. I can tell you have a listener's ear. I have a story to tell. Won't you hear this tale of a dying man?

My name—it's unimportant right now. What I was is more significant; I was a victim during the 9/11 attack. I was a successful lawyer in my early thirties attending a meeting with my client. I don't recall my client's name, the case I was defending, or the room number I was in, but I was in the North Tower several floors below the first plane when it crashed into the building—but not far enough away.

The building shook. I grabbed the edge of the table to remain standing and looked around for some answer. Was it an earthquake? Others thought the same and stood in the doorway while most of us hurried to the stairwell.

Meeting dismissed.

I wasn't fast enough, though—thank God for that. As I ushered my client out of the room, part of the ceiling gave way in front of me, killing my client while burying me alive. I could tell you about how horrible it was to be buried in that rubble while the air thickened with smoke and fire rained down upon me, waiting for death or a savior. The groans and cries, the shrieks and bellowing roar of fire from that day forward always haunted any moment of silence I might have.

In the darkness of the growing smoke, I heard a cry followed by breaking glass; then light filtered into the darkness but only for a moment. I stared at that light, mesmerized. It looked so promising and hopeful. I felt as though I could reach out and touch it, but I couldn't move as I was pinned under the debris. Soon, to my grief, darkness once again consumed the light, leaving me alone in shadows.

I don't know how long I was there. I don't know why I didn't lose consciousness from inhaling the smoke, but someone came to my rescue—my nameless heroes—and dug me out.

"His leg is broken," I heard someone say to his fellow and felt pain snap up my leg through my back and to my neck. I cried aloud and clenched someone's hand.

"Don't worry, buddy, you're okay. We've got you," another

firefighter assured me as they pulled me from the wreckage. Soon they stabilized my leg and whatever other injuries I had, and then four men took the task to carry me down a hundred or so flights of stairs. And this—this is where my story begins.

As soon as we entered the stairwell, someone yelled, "Injured coming down!" Everyone moved to one side of the stairs, allowing the firefighters to carry me down without too much trouble. The further away we got from the noise of the fire, the more I tuned in to the sounds around me. First, I heard mumbling as friends, family, and co-workers tried to comfort each other.

"God bless you," I heard many say not to me but to my saviors, the firefighters. Some people wept while others cursed and yelled or held their silence. If I was dead, then this was Hell, dark and humid, the smell of smoke on everyone. I recalled the Scripture verses speaking of how there shall be crying and gnashing of teeth in the darkness of Hell. Fear seized me at this thought, and I squeezed the hand of one of my rescuers just to make sure I was still alive.

"Hey, hey, you're okay," the kid was quick to assure me, "You're going to be okay."

I tried to respond but couldn't. My mouth wouldn't work. My tongue felt swollen. I only saw darkness and vague faces of total strangers—some friendly, sad, weeping, mad, but scared all the same. All the faces blurred together; I saw my mother and father in that stairwell, my older sister and dead brother, my wife and little girl. I saw them there, or so I thought. Too many faces, too much fear, my mind tried to comfort me with what was not really there.

I felt a wave of unconsciousness lap across my mind, but I did not sink into the bliss of dreams, for a voice called me out. Piercing the darkness as sharp as any light, a single voice sang aloud, echoing off the close quarters of the stairwell. All cursing silenced. The weeping stopped. For a brief moment all stood still, holding breath and listening for the angelic voice.

As she sang, the words and melody became clear to me, and others joined in:

*Oh, say! Can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,*

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:
Oh, say! Does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Our dear land's song dispersed the fear and tension and put the people at ease. By the time the song came to an end, everyone had joined in, even the firefighters who carried me, though they muttered the words with tears in their voices. For myself, I could not sing because I had no voice or strength, but I listened to the song, ready to die if it was my time.

Silence engulfed the stairwell after the song. No one knew what to do or say.

Another song broke out by the same singer, and this time I realized we were getting closer to her in the stairwell. At first, I did not recognize the song or the melody, but as I listened, Psalm 91 came to mind:

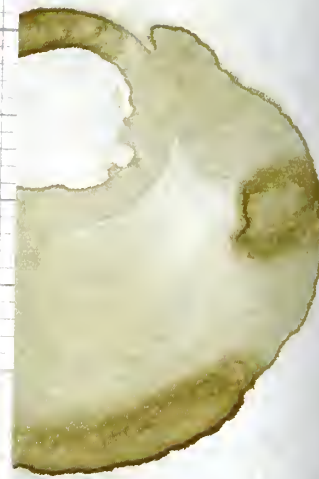
*Thou shalt not need to be afraid,
For terrors of the night;
Nor for the arrow that doth fly,
By day, while it is light;*

*Nor for the pestilence, that walks,
In darkness secretly;
Nor for destruction, that doth waste,
At noon-day openly.*

*A thousand at thy side shall fall,
On thy right hand shall lie,
Ten thousand dead; yet unto thee,
It shall not once come nigh.*

*Only thou with thine eye shalt look,
And a beholder be;
And thou therein the just reward,
Of wicked men shalt see.*

*Because the Lord, who constantly,
My refuge is alone,
Ev'n the most High, is made by thee,
Thy habitation;*



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March 2008

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*No plague shall near thy dwelling come;
No ill shall thee befall:
For thee to keep in all thy ways,
His angels charge he shall.*

At this verse, I passed the lone singer in the stairwell. Young and beautiful with smoke stains marring her face, she sang so loud, so pure with her whole heart as if she sang in Heaven itself. Unafraid and unashamed as others stared and gawked, mesmerized by her crystal voice, she met my gaze—she had eyes blue as the ocean—I know that much, and she smiled as my company walked on past.

While I went further and further down the stairs, I clung to her singing voice as she ended the Psalm and began Psalm 23. Others joined her voice once again, and when I finally exited the stairwell, I heard the fourth verse:

*Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me; and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.*

Once out of the building, my rescuers took me to a shelter and then went back in. I think they took the singing stairwell on their way back up to save another life. I hope they took it. It would have been a peaceful place to die on that day.

The buildings collapsed not long after I was brought out of the North Tower. I tried to convince myself the singer somehow survived or simply didn't die. Maybe she was an angel sent to calm those who stood at death's threshold. I don't know. I never saw her again. Sometimes in the still of night when I awake from nightmare's fright, I hear her voice on the moonlight. She's singing now, can't you hear? So many others sing with her—a host of angels or so it seems.

I am a Christian, my dear friend. I am not afraid to die. I cheated death once before. I cannot do so anymore. Thanks for coming, dear old friend. I never told anyone my tale. And now you know, and you know so well, the tale of the Stairwell Choir.

When the World Isn't Looking

When the world isn't looking,
A veil is pulled back:
Fairies dance,
Elves sing.

Magic, for a moment, awakes;
Dreams turn into reality;
But it's only for a moment
When the world isn't looking.

Only for a blink of an eye,
This world surfaces.
When others turn their backs,
It dances with a dream-touch.

When the world isn't looking,
Girls transform into fairytale
princesses;
Boys turn into knights in shining armor;
Worries are not theirs to own.

It's what you do
When no one is around.
It's what you'd see
If no one could see you.

A goofy face,
Silly accent,
Unexpected behavior,
When the world isn't looking.

Dreams come to life;
Untapped talents unleash;
Monologues are spoken aloud
When the world isn't looking.

The strongest men cry;
The weakest are heroes;
The dead return to the living
When the world isn't looking.

The calm break with anger;
The furious find a peace;
The lost find their way
When the world isn't looking.

Behind closed doors,
Drawn curtains,
Through secret windows,
A fabulous world unveils.

16

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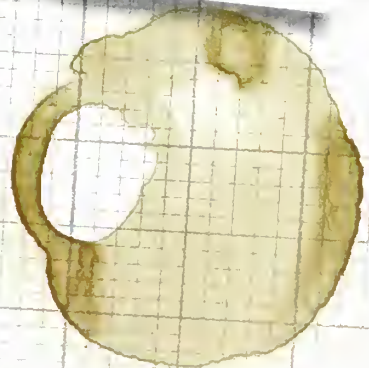
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A room without a door,
 A song without melody,
 Day without the sun,
 Night without the stars.

You wouldn't see it if you looked.
 You wouldn't know it if you saw it.
 It appears at times the heart knows
 When the world isn't looking.

You know it when you feel it.
 You know once you've been there.
 Memories of a hidden world remain
 Forever when the world isn't looking.

**Kelly Blanchard/Sophomore/
 Grand Saline**



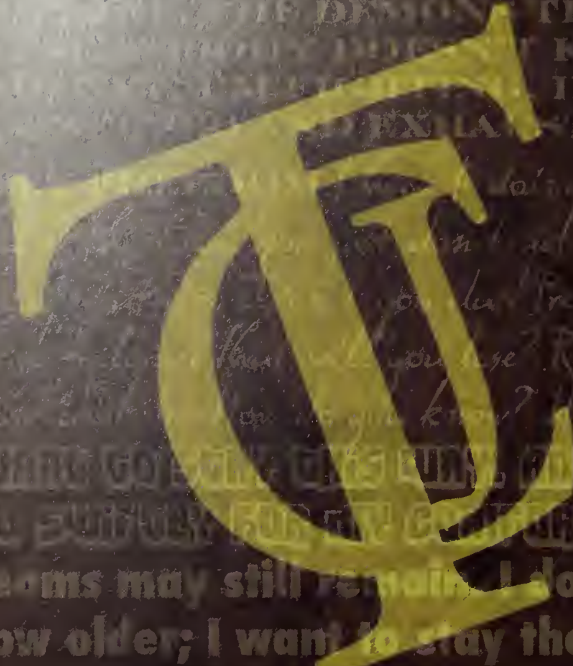


Train Station

Molly Stanley/Sophomore/Lindale/
B&W Photograph



Childhood Memories
Joyle Rosenberg/Sophomore/Arpl/
Digitally Enhanced Photograph



Spring Two Thousand Nine